United Nations A/56/PV.97

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-sixth session

97th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 27 March 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Earthquake in Afghanistan

The Acting President: Before turning to the items on our agenda this afternoon, may I, on behalf of all the members of the General Assembly, extend our deepest sympathy to the Government and people of Afghanistan for the tragic loss of life and extensive material damage that have resulted from the recent earthquake. May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for help.

I now call on the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan): On behalf of the Interim Administration of Afghanistan, I would like to express profound gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his recent appeal for emergency humanitarian assistance for the victims of the tragic earthquake in northern Afghanistan on the night of 25-26 March 2002.

The earthquake, which struck the district of Nahrin, in the northern Afghan province of Baghlan, south of the city of Kunduz, has left a long trail of destruction and extensive human loss among the local population of the city and surrounding villages. According to the latest reports received from Afghanistan, the death toll presently stands at about 2,000, with approximately 600 bodies recovered; while another 4,000 persons have been reported severely injured. Estimates also indicate that the quake has left as many as 20,000 civilians homeless.

I would like to express my appreciation to those Member States, international relief organizations and aid agencies that have responded promptly to provide the victims with emergency supplies. I wish to seize this opportunity to reiterate the appeal made earlier by the Interim Administration of Afghanistan for emergency international assistance to the thousands of civilians in dire need of help to recuperate. I should like to suggest that all Governments intending to assist Afghanistan at this tragic time establish contact with the Ministry of the Interior of the Interim Administration of Afghanistan through the Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), located in Kabul.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/56/780/Add.4)

The Acting President: In the letter contained in document A/56/780/Add.4, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications contained in documents A/56/780 and addenda 1 through 3, Cape Verde has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

02-30609 (E)

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/56/780/Add.4?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 117

Elimination of racism and racial discrimination

Report of the Third Committee (A/56/581)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/56/883)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now consider the report of the Third Committee on agenda item 117, entitled "Elimination of racism and racial discrimination" (A/56/581).

I request the Rapporteur of the Third Committee, Mr. Juraj Priputen of Slovakia, to introduce the report of the Third Committee.

Mr. Priputen (Slovakia): I have the honour to present the report of the Third Committee under agenda item 117, entitled "Elimination of racism and racial discrimination", which is contained in document A/56/581.

Under this item, the Third Committee, in section III, paragraph 28, of its report, recommends the adoption of four draft resolutions. In paragraph 29 of the same report, the Committee recommends the adoption of one draft decision.

I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to several corrections that should be made to the report.

In section II, paragraph 8 (a), of the report, regarding the replacement of the sixth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.83/Rev.1, the words "outcome of the", which appear in the first line immediately before "World Conference", should be deleted, as should the words ", held from 31 August to 8 September 2001 at Durban, South Africa,". The paragraph thus reads:

> "Welcoming that the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance urged States and the international community to support the activities of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination,".

Therefore, in section III of the report, the sixth preambular paragraph of draft resolution I, which is found on page 29 of the English text, should also read as follows:

> "Welcoming that the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance urged States and the international community to support the activities of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination."

Turning back to section II of the report, in paragraph 14, in the list of the results of the voting on draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.84/Rev.1, which is entitled "Comprehensive implementation of the outcome of and follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance", Cuba should be inserted between Croatia and Cyprus as having voted in favour of the draft resolution.

Lastly, also in section II of the report, in paragraph 19, in the narrative dealing with draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.85/Rev.1, entitled "Measures to combat contemporary forms of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", after the words "submitted by the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.85", the following phrase should be inserted:

> "as well as Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland".

I commend this report to the General Assembly for its consideration.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Third Committee that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 54/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the report of the Third Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Third Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance. This means that where a recorded vote was taken, we will do the same. I should hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Third Committee.

Mr. Kennedy (United States of America): The United States is committed to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, both within the United States and around the world. Our national experience shows that this battle is a long one, one that requires a strong, unequivocal commitment. Our commitment is reflected in the comprehensive national report we made last year in Geneva to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

One part of our fight as a world community is the fight against anti-Semitism. This ugly phenomenon led to the most devastating genocide in modern times, yet we still see its existence throughout the world. A civilized society must guard against this or any ideology that attempts to denigrate one group of people; that leads to hatred, exclusion and violence.

As is well known, the United States withdrew from the World Conference against Racism in Durban and, accordingly, was not part of the agreement to adopt the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. In our view, the Conference placed inappropriate and unacceptable focus on a single country-specific situation that was, and remains, totally irrelevant to the subject matter of the Conference.

Particularly at this moment, when it is critically important to make every effort to reduce the violence in the Middle East and guide the conflicting parties back to the negotiating table, the international community should not assess disproportionate blame on any one side in the dispute. In fact, in the Fifth Committee, we had strongly advocated a short delay in funding the Programme of Action in order to give the parties in the region time to work out a ceasefire and a way back to the negotiating table. Also in the Fifth Committee, my delegation proposed asking for an interim report from the Office of Internal Oversight Services — a report that had been requested when this body adopted the budget resolution last December — so that we might be better informed before making a decision to provide an additional $500,000 to the United Nations Centre for Human Rights in Geneva.

In our view, the Durban Conference deviated from its original stated purpose of crafting positive, forward-looking solutions to contemporary racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We are also mindful that the Conference was accompanied in the streets of Durban by some of the worst examples of hate and intolerance witnessed in many decades.

The United States has additional concerns about this draft resolution, namely, those paragraphs that will require an increased expenditure of funds from the regular budget of the United Nations and which place significant added pressure on the budget agreement of last December to set the biennium regular budget level at $2.625 billion — a level that is already being questioned — as it strives to provide efficient and effective services to Member States. The draft resolution calls for additional funds to be allocated towards the operation of an anti-discrimination unit in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the establishment of a body of five eminent persons to monitor the implementation of the Durban documents. Because we do not agree to the establishment of either body, we continue to object to the Third Committee's approval of these mechanisms and this draft resolution and to the Fifth Committee's approval of $500,000 of United Nations regular budget funding for them.

For the foregoing reasons, the United States must vote against the adoption of draft resolution II. Nevertheless, make no mistake that the United States remains committed to the goals which the Conference

was initially established to fulfil: to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Our position is simply that, in this struggle, we must keep our focus clear and never again allow a conference on racism to typify in some respects the very opposite of its original aims and objectives.

We request that this statement be reproduced in the official records of the General Assembly.

Mr. Laurin (Canada): When this matter was before the Third Committee, Canada gave an explanation of vote and when it came before the Fifth Committee, Canada gave an explanation of position. We take up this issue for the third time because we consider it essential to do so. We will be obliged to do so each and every time resolutions and decisions of the United Nations call for the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in their entirety. This is precisely the situation we face today with the draft resolutions under agenda item 117 that call for the implementation of the outcome of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

Canada went to Durban to address important issues of racism with the international community. We were deeply disappointed. The Conference was inexcusably marred by unacceptable references to the Middle East. Canada regrets that the Conference did not focus on its noble objectives. We regret that the time and energy that should have been dedicated to the eradication of racism were squandered.

Canada chose to stay at the Conference until its conclusion in order to exert positive influence on its proceedings and to unequivocally condemn attempts to delegitimize the State of Israel and to dishonour the history and suffering of the Jewish people. We wish to reiterate here today once again that Canada dissociates itself integrally from all references in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action directly or indirectly relating to the Middle East.

As we stated at the conclusion of the Conference and during the negotiations of the draft resolution before us, any process, declaration or language presented in any form that does not serve to advance a negotiated peace that will bring security, dignity and respect to the people of the region is unacceptable. We also disassociate ourselves from any language that can be construed as welcoming, endorsing or encouraging the implementation of the provisions of the World Conference against Racism Declaration and Programme of Action that Canada did not agree to at Durban.

In our statement in Durban, we also disagreed with the manner in which some issues of the past and grounds of discrimination were addressed in the Conference outcome documents. We regret the inclusion without agreement, in fact, of an inappropriate footnote on gender. Canada also regrets that we were unable to maintain the agreement endorsed in Durban on the use of the term "indigenous peoples" in the resolutions on measures to combat racism. It is our view that this draft resolution is directly based on the outcome documents of the World Conference against Racism. Therefore, we should have used the agreed language from Durban, including explanatory paragraph 24.

That said, we believe that the outcome documents contain helpful language in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We are particularly encouraged by the recognition of the situation faced by indigenous peoples, as well as by the attention which the outcome documents pay to the concept of multiple discrimination, the role of youth, the media, the Internet and globalization.

Canada is strongly and sincerely committed to the eradication of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and all discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, descent, religion or language. Canada remains fully committed to the fight against racism and will use the positive measures contained in the Durban outcome documents, as well as the whole range of anti-racism strategies developed by multilateral organizations, in our continuing efforts to eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

However, as I have stated, Canada continues to have serious concerns about the Durban process as well as its outcome documents. This is why Canada will abstain in the voting on draft resolution II before us today.

We request that this statement be reproduced in the official records of the General Assembly.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the four draft resolutions

recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 28 of its report and on the draft decision recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 29 of the same report.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution II is contained in document A/56/883.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination", as orally corrected by the Rapporteur.

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution I, as orally corrected by the Rapporteur?

Draft resolution I, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 56/265).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Australia, Canada

Draft resolution II was adopted by 134 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions (resolution 56/266).

[*Subsequently, the delegations of Malaysia and Suriname informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.*]

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Measures to combat contemporary forms of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 56/267).

The Acting President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Measures to be taken against political platforms and activities based on doctrines of superiority and violent nationalist ideologies which are based on racial discrimination or ethnic exclusiveness and xenophobia, including neo-Nazism".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution IV without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 56/268).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision entitled "Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision recommended by the Third Committee?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Cuba, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote on one of the resolutions just adopted.

Mr. Amorós Núñez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to make a statement after the vote on draft resolution II, entitled "Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance".

At the outset, we associate ourselves with the statement made by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 following the adoption of the draft resolution in the Third Committee. We cannot fail to take this opportunity to say how much we regret that a vote was taken on the draft resolution after we, along with many other delegations, had worked to prevent that from happening, and especially because my delegation, as well as many other delegations of the Group of 77, had made an extra effort to try to achieve consensus and accommodate the concerns of all delegations with respect to the draft resolution.

We should like to point out that in the future, my delegation — and, I assume, many others also — will work to ensure that the resolution engenders the same commitment that the international community has displayed with respect to other international United Nations conferences and meetings. The Durban Conference marked a milestone in the international community's commitment to the fight against racism, which we must reaffirm with all possible strength in the future.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of agenda item 117?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

The Acting President: As indicated in the footnote to document A/56/L.75, in order for the General Assembly to take action on the draft resolution contained in that document, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 35, "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of agenda item 35?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Members will recall that at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2001, the General Assembly decided to consider agenda item 35 directly in plenary meeting. In order for the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on draft resolution A/56/L.75, may I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 35?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 35 (*continued*)

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Draft resolution (A/56/L.75)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Mongolia to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.75.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): My delegation has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.75, entitled "Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to be held in Ulaanbaatar in 2003", on behalf of the delegations listed in that document. I am pleased to announce that since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Angola, Belarus, Bolivia, Canada, Cape Verde, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Georgia, the Gambia, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Ukraine and Venezuela.

On 14 December 2001, the General Assembly adopted resolution 56/96, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to

promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". The fact that 118 Member States sponsored that resolution was a vivid demonstration of the international community's support for the efforts of Governments to promote or consolidate democratization in their own countries and globally.

In that resolution, the General Assembly welcomed, inter alia, the decision of the Government of Mongolia to host the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in 2003. I wish to take this opportunity to express once again to all Member States the appreciation of my Government for their valuable support with respect to the hosting of that important and prestigious conference in Mongolia.

Mongolia is most honoured to host the Conference. The offer to host it is connected to a strong belief in the immense creative potential of popular participation, good governance and democratic rules. Exchanges of views and experiences in democratic transformations will be useful for all who are willing to develop or consolidate democratization in their countries and internationally and who are committed to doing so.

It goes without saying that in order to make the Conference a success, organizational and substantive preparations should start without delay. Both organizers and participants need to work closely together to ensure a successful outcome. Therefore, in order to allow Member States and international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to start their preparations in good time, it is proposed that the General Assembly fix the date of the Conference.

Furthermore, as in previous similar cases, the draft resolution invites the Secretary-General, Member States and the relevant specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the intergovernmental follow-up mechanism to the Fourth International Conference, held at Cotonou, to give all possible support to and actively cooperate with the preparations for the Ulaanbaatar Conference.

On behalf of all the sponsors, I express the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by the Assembly without a vote.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): It is a great pleasure for me to speak on behalf of the delegation of Benin following the introduction by Mongolia of draft resolution A/56/L.75, entitled "Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to be held in Ulaanbaatar in 2003".

On behalf of my Government, I should like to congratulate Mongolia for the speed with which the dates 18, 19 and 20 June 2003 were decided on with respect to the convening of the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, three years after the Cotonou Conference. I should like also to congratulate Mongolia for having agreed to host this Conference.

The fact that the Fifth Conference of New or Restored Democracies is being held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, is an indication that the principles and ideals of democracy are becoming entrenched and consolidated throughout the continent. That is why I should like to take this opportunity to invite the international community and the agencies of the United Nations system to lend their support to the effective holding of this important Conference.

Considering, furthermore, that the present draft resolution is basically procedural in nature, I am convinced that the Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.75.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.75, entitled "Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to be held in Ulaanbaatar in 2003".

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of A/56/L.75: Andorra, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Mali, Panama, Suriname and the United States of America.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.75?

Draft resolution A/56/L.75 was adopted (resolution 56/269).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 35?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 121, 122, 123, 125, 130 together with 131 and 132, 131, 132 and 158.

I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Santiago Wins of Uruguay, to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Wins (Uruguay), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to present to the General Assembly the reports prepared by the Fifth Committee during the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

In this continuation, which took place between 4 and 19 March, the Committee held three official meetings and numerous informal meetings. The Fifth Committee made the following recommendations in connection with the various items on the budget.

Concerning agenda item 121, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the Fifth Committee's report is contained in document A/56/734/Add.1. In paragraphs 10 and 11 of that report, the Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of two draft resolutions and a draft decision. Draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the United Nations system common services at Geneva"; draft resolution II, entitled "Proposed regulations governing the status, basic rights and duties of officials other than Secretariat officials and experts on mission and regulations governing the status, basic rights and duties of the Secretary-General"; and the draft decision, entitled "Action taken on certain items", were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 122, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001", the Fifth Committee's report is contained in document A/56/653/Add.1. In paragraph 12 of the report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of four draft resolutions. Draft resolution I, entitled "Construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa"; draft resolution II, entitled "Integrated Management Information System"; draft resolution III, entitled "Comprehensive study of the question of honorariums payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations"; and draft resolution IV, entitled "Standards of accommodation by air travel", were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In paragraph 6 of the report contained in document A/56/735/Add.1, also under agenda item 122, "Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001", the Committee recommends the adoption of a draft resolution, part A of which is entitled "Final budget appropriations for the biennium 2000-2001", and which the Committee adopted without a vote.

In paragraph 20 of the report contained in document A/56/736/Add.1, under agenda item 123, "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003", the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of five draft resolutions: draft resolution I, entitled "Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized"; draft resolution II, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003"; draft resolution III, entitled "Documentation availability in six languages on the United Nations web site"; draft resolution IV, entitled "Review of public information activities in the United Nations"; and draft resolution V, entitled "Documents and publications of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia". All were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In paragraph 6 of the report contained in document A/56/728/Add.1, under agenda item 125, "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt a draft resolution on [illegible] item, which the Committee adopted without a vote.

In paragraph 6 of the report contained in document A/56/881, under agenda item 130, "Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services", agenda item 131, "Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991", and agenda item 132, "Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring

States between 1 January and 31 December 1994", the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up investigation into possible fee-splitting arrangements between defence counsel and indigent detainees at the International Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia". The Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

In paragraph 6 of the report contained in document A/56/730/Add.1, under agenda item 131, and in paragraph 6 of the report contained in document A/56/731/Add.1 under agenda item 132, dealing, respectively, with financing of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and with financing of the International Tribunal for Rwanda, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt a draft resolution entitled "Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991" and a draft resolution entitled "Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994". The Committee adopted the draft resolutions without a vote.

In paragraph 6 of the report contained in document A/56/713/Add.1, under agenda item 158, "Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo", the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt a draft resolution on that item, which the Committee adopted without a vote.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless notified otherwise. I therefore hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 122 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Reports of the Fifth Committee (A/56/653/Add.1 and A/56/735/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will turn first to the report of the Fifth Committee contained in document A/56/653/Add.1. The Assembly will take a decision on the four draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 12 of that report.

Draft resolution I is entitled "Construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa". The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/270).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Integrated Management Information System". The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/271).

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Comprehensive study of the question of honorariums payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations". The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 56/272).

The Acting President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Standards of accommodation for air travel". The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution IV without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 56/273).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now turn to the report of the Fifth Committee contained in document A/56/735/Add.1.

The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of the report, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/240 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 122.

Agenda item 123 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/56/736/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will take a decision on the five draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 20 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/274).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/254 D).

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Documentation availability in six languages on the United Nations web site". The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 56/275).

The Acting President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Review of public information activities in the United Nations". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 56/276).

The Acting President: Draft resolution V is entitled "Documents and publications of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia". The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution V without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution V was adopted (resolution 56/277).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Cuba, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on one of the draft resolutions just adopted.

Ms. Silot Bravo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Group of 77 and China have expressed their concern with respect to the implementation of the measures announced by the Secretary-General in his note verbale of 28 February 2002 and in information circular ST/IC/2002/13, which has to a large extent violated General Assembly resolutions on the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 and on the calendar of conferences, and because it has had an fundamental impact on Member States, on the functioning of the regional groups and, specifically, that of the Group of 77 and China, and on the functioning of the Organization itself.

In its relevant resolutions, the General Assembly has rejected proposals to reduce services directly affecting Member States and regional groups, specifically conference services and the functioning of substantive departments, including the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. The Group of 77 and China are concerned also about the negative impact of reaching certain arbitrary budget levels on United Nations activities and programmes mandated by Member States.

The Group of 77 and China believe also that these measures ignore the importance and validity of current procedures and practices for the provision of conference services, services to Member States and other services covered in the Secretary-General's note verbale but which must be provided to Member States, to the General Assembly and its Main Committees and to regional groups. Such services are vital to the efficiency and success of the work of such groups and bodies and are essential to the work of the Organization as a whole.

The measures hastily implemented three months into a two-year budget exercise, without the approval of the General Assembly and against the general wishes of the membership of the Organization, have resulted in a reduction in conference services, making it impossible for a number of bodies to conclude their programmes of work, and causing the unanticipated postponement of meetings and the convening of meetings without the minimum requirements such as audio, interpretation and air conditioning or in buildings outside Headquarters. It has further prevented the adoption of decisions in line with the calendar of conferences and has caused the cancellation of several meetings of the Group of 77 and China — whose functioning has, in practice, been hampered and limited.

The Group of 77 and China submitted a Fifth Committee draft resolution on this subject because of the lack of an adequate response to their repeated requests for the restoration of suspended services, especially conference services for committees, other bodies and regional groups and Internet support for missions. The Group of 77 and China attach particular importance to the draft resolution just adopted as resolution 56/254 D, with respect to envisaged cuts in a number of services vital to Member States and to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 56/253, 56/254 and 56/242. We hope that the Secretariat will implement the resolution comprehensively and without delay.

Adopted following an intensive process of negotiations, the resolution notes with concern the implementation of cutback measures and their effect on services provided to Member States. It requests the Secretary-General to implement resolutions on the budget and on conference services in such a way as to avoid averse effects on Member States. Of special importance are the paragraphs calling for the provision of adequate conference services to organs, committees and regional groups pursuant to resolutions on the pattern of conferences and for minimizing the adverse effect of any changes in the existing and established practice with respect to the provision and availability of conference servicing. Further, the resolution would restore immediately Internet services to permanent missions, using the approximately $750,000 released as a result of the suspension on an exceptional basis of honorariums payable to members of the International Law Commission, the International Narcotics Control Board, the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child as of 6 April.

That was not the ideal solution for the Group of 77 and China, but it was the only possible way at least to restore Internet services in the face of the absence of acceptable proposals by the Secretariat on a resolution of that matter within the framework of the budget. The Group of 77 and China hope that the Secretariat's proposals to the General Assembly next May will permit comprehensive implementation of the provisions of resolution on the pattern of conferences within the framework of resources approved for the 2002-2003 budget, and will make it possible to restore conference services to committees, other bodies and regional groups, and in particular to the Group of 77 and China.

In the resolution we have just adopted, the General Assembly further decides that, in the context of the first performance report on the budget at the fifty-seventh session, special attention be focused on the restoration of all necessary services to Member States.

If the situation and the unfortunate climate created in the Organization by the implementation of these measures persist, the Group of 77 and China and

regional groups will be prevented from making a positive contribution to preparations for forthcoming summits and other United Nations meetings. That would be unacceptable in the light of the international and multilateral nature of the Organization and the equal rights of all Member States.

The Group of 77 and China hope therefore that the Secretariat will find other ways to implement the budget cuts that will not be at the expense of Member States or of the resolutions of the General Assembly. We know this can be done within the framework of budgetary procedures and that measures affecting the functioning of the Main Committees, of other bodies and of regional groups, including the Group of 77 and China, can be rescinded as soon as possible, which is indispensable for the efficiency and success of the work of the Organization.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 123.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/56/728/Add.1)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/243 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 125.

Agenda items 130 (*continued*), **131 and 132**

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/56/881)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The draft resolution is entitled "Follow-up investigation into possible fee-splitting arrangements between defence counsel and indigent detainees at the International Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia".

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/278).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 130, 131 and 132.

Agenda item 131 (*continued*)

Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/56/730/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/247 B).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 131.

Agenda item 132 (*continued*)

Financing of the Internatioaal Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/56/731/Add.1)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/248 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 132.

Agenda item 158

Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/56/713/Add.1)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/252 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 158.

Agenda item 121

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/56/734/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 10 of its report and on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 11 of the same report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the United Nations system common services at Geneva". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/279).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Proposed regulations governing the status, basic rights and duties of officials other than Secretariat officials and experts on mission and regulations governing the status, basic rights and duties of the Secretary-General". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/280).

The Acting President: We turn now to the draft decision entitled "Action taken on certain items". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 121.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.